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Computer User's Group
March, 1981 Vol 3 No. 3

Comp. Centre Meeting

On February 10 the Computer Centre held an open meeting to discuss system changes and to answer questions from users. Despite a certain amount of subtle sarcasm in the latest issue of Computer Words, the meeting was fairly well attended and a number of interesting items cropped up:

- For those of you who have been locked in a closet for the past month, we now have a new computer - a CDC Cyber 170 model 835. The new machine is to be used for academic work, while the old 174 (downgraded to a 172) will be used for everything else. At the same time, the "front end" has been changed to a Modcomp Classic with the proverbial racing stripes. This has several consequences, among which is a new telephone number for dial-up users (879-7380), and several enhanced communications capabilities. One very welcome change is the addition of more ports. The Centre will implement multiplexing in order to provide still more ports.
- A new control box will soon be attached to the Cluster printer to fix some problems that now exist (such as dropped lines). The new controller will allow some little goodies like upper-and-lower case printing and graphics.
- The RJE command has been changed to eliminate a minor problem (it seems that the old version allowed passwords to be stolen....). We will soon be able to kill jobs waiting in queues (very handy if you revise your programs faster than the printer can print them).
- Now for the bad news: the USER command will be taken away from student accounts, since it can be used for certain unorthodox purposes; students will not be allowed two accounts (i.e., one at Sir George & one at Loyola); and the Centre is firm in its stance on the IBM link at Loyola (more on that later).

The meeeting was succesful enough so that the Centre has scheduled a second one on Thursday, March 19 at 1:15 PM in room H-435. Both students and faculty are urged to attend. We'll be there!

IBM Link

For those of you who were with the guy in the closet, the Centre has stated that it will terminate the link with McGill's IBM computer at the end of the current year. The reasons given include high cost and low use. The statement has sparked some heated letters to various editors (see some recent issues of The Link), pointing out that IBM equipment accounts for about 60% of the market, and that the IBM link

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presents the only opportunity for Concordia's students to get some experience with IBM hardware. So far the issue has not been resolved; stay tuned.....

Seminars

CUG will be presenting a number of seminars on various subjects in the coming weeks. These include:

Title	Date		Time	Room
Intro to APL	Thu	March 12	2:45	H-333-6
Intro to Timesharing	Fri	March 13	11:45	H-333-6
SPSS	Tue	March 17	5:30	H-333-6
Text Processing (FORMAL)	Wed	March 18	4:15	H-333-6
Cyber Control Language	Fri	March 20	11:45	H-333-6
Text Editors	Tue	March 24	4:15	H-333-6

CUG Elections

CUG will be holding their annual elections from March 31 to April 3. Nominations should be submitted to the CUG office (H-983) before March 30. All CUG members are eligible both to run for office and to vote. If there are fewer candidates nominated than there are positions, executives will be appointed to the empty seats by acclamation by the present executive from the remaining membership.

T-Shirts Revisited

The first order of CUG T-shirts sold out so quickly that we ordered another batch. We still have a number left in navy and light blue. Come by the CUG office (H-983) anytime (within reason), fork over $5.00 of your hard-earned cash, and you will be presented with a CUG original. Move over, Pierre Cardin.

BITS

- It has come to our attention that despite the Centre's marvelous promises there is an acute lack of telex facilities on the ninth floor. To make matters worse, a goodly number of terminals seem to be chronically out of commission. The ratio between students needing terminals and terminals available seems to be on the order of 30 to 1 (assuming all terminals are working); the ratio for faculty is at least one order of magnitude better.

- A few days ago we had occasion to ask Ivan Fuchs a few questions; we asked about paper recycling, and were told that the Centre will look into the feasability of doing this at the

Hall building. Paper is already being recycled at Loyola and the Centre. We were also told that more clusters are on the way, mostly to replace keypunches (however, the keypunches are expected to be around for at least two more years). We hasten to point out that, although the Clusters are a good idea for first- and middle-second-year students, they are too restrictive in their capabilities to be of much use in more advanced work.

- Another result of our conversation is the Centre's official word on dial-up ports. Dial-up ports are very expensive, and so rumors have been flying that the Centre might forbid their use by undergraduates. Well, terminal owners, you can rest easy. At worst, the Centre will restrict the use of dial-up ports to off-peak hours (i.e. 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM) unless you have no other means of access. No action is planned before May.

- Any COBOL addicts who are having trouble with "AFTER ADVANCING 3 (or more) LINES" will be pleased to know that the problem has a simple solution: just add "*NOTRIP" to your LGO card (eg. LGO,*NOTRIP.) That should fix things.

- Speaking of FIX, you should know that this popular editor has been enhanced. The "MR" parameter is no longer needed, among other things. There is a new instant card (version 3.0) available free at the POD and CUG offices (and possibly at the bookstore as well) detailing these changes. Take some of these commands with a grain of salt; not all of them have been implemented yet (such as \F and the character "^" in an overlay). You should know that the Centre prefers that we use FIX rather than NTXED or other editors, since it puts less of a strain on system resources.

- The IEEE (the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) is considering changing their name to reflect the growing influence of computer professionals. One possible title is IECE (Institute of Electrical and Computer Engineers).

- The University and the Department of Computer Science will be holding a Computer Science Open House on Wednesday, March 18 from 2:00 to 5:00 at the Hall building and the Centre.

- Congratulations to NOSCONU for finally answering their mail.

- Despite the best efforts of Centre personnel (namely T.J.D., who was chained to a terminal for three days) the new-and-improved Cyber continues to undergo teething pains (or perhaps it s the users feeling the pain...). Little annoyances continue to plague us, such as MUTE dying periodically (and thus killing FIX), the Modcomp randomly dropping the occasional user, SPSS falling apart, and (last but not least) the batch entry station going completely bananas when some well-meaning student attempts to print more than 136 columns on the high-speed printers. Don t get us wrong; we sympathise with the Centre; but it still hurts (especially 2 hours before an assignment is due and your DISPOSE is 373rd in the queue.....).

- Finally, we want it known that we completely agree with the centre on its opinion about Computer Turkeys. One reason that those DISPOSEs always seem to be in 373rd place is that there is always some twit ahead of you printing out nine copies of the COBOL compiler to use as kitty litter.